

Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's Weekly Field Memo
April 13, 2012

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Other:

11. [TIAA-CREF](#) prepares FAQs on Rhode Island defined-contribution retirement plan – *see attachment*

Attachments to this field memo:

TIAA-CREF FAQs 4-13-12

Action Item Calendar

Today (April 13): [Letter to teachers](#), principals on evaluations to be distributed
April 20: Estimates of 2012-13 [first-year teachers](#) due

Extended (April 27): Deadline for submitting to RIDE [district Teacher of the Year](#) selections
April 27: Recommendations for [Educator Talent Pool](#) due
April 27: LEA [testing schedules](#) due
May 1: [Asset Protection Plans](#) due
June 8: Data collection for [PARCC Technology Readiness](#) Tool due
June 30: Schools and districts submit [final personnel assignments](#)
July 15: Deadline for final reporting of [evaluation ratings](#)

Notes from Commissioner Gist:

Stakeholders to discuss improvements to evaluation system at regional forums

Over the past few months, we have been soliciting feedback on the Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation System through a variety of channels, including a series of “Moving Forward” Race to the Top meetings. We have been using this feedback to refine the evaluation model that we will implement during the coming school year (2012-13). The feedback from our last Moving Forward meeting, in December, indicated that we need to provide more opportunities for information-sharing and collaboration regarding the evaluation process.

We recently released a [preview](#) of the changes we are putting in place in the Rhode Island Model. Throughout the month, we are holding regional meetings to discuss with educators the improvements under way to the Rhode Island Model. Along with our Moving Forward co-hosts, RISSA, RIASC, NEARI, RIFTHP, and the League of Charter Schools, we have decided to allow the regional forums to take the place of our regular Moving Forward meeting this spring. I encourage you, along with school committee members, union leaders, teachers, and other education stakeholders, to attend the regional forums.

The next two regional forums will be held on:

Tuesday, April 24 (4 - 6 p.m.)
Providence Career & Technical Academy Auditorium
91 Fricker St.
Providence 02903
Thursday, April 26 (4 - 6 p.m.)
Westerly Middle School Auditorium
10 Sandy Hill Rd.
Westerly 02891

The Moving Forward co-hosts have agreed to regroup to plan for an event in the fall.

LEA Teacher of the Year deadline extended to April 27

As you may remember, last year I strongly encouraged all LEAs to participate in the Teacher of the Year program. Though we did not attain that goal, we enjoyed a significant increase in participation in the program last year. We have made a number of changes in the timeline and criteria for the selection of Teacher of the Year, but the process begins with your selection of a Teacher of the Year from your district or LEA.

We have extended the Teacher of the Year application deadline to **April 27**, allowing you more time to complete your application and selection process. I strongly encourage you to select a district or LEA teacher to represent LEA throughout the coming school year (2012-13).

We have expanded the Teacher of the Year Program to reward and recognize Rhode Island teachers for their dedication and talent. Each LEA Teacher of the Year represents the high level of teacher excellence within our state. All of the LEA Teachers of the Year will have the opportunity to meet three or four times during their year of service to share ideas and to receive support from RIDE regarding how to complete the application for Rhode Island Teacher of the Year.

Please send your completed District/LEA Teacher of the Year materials to us by **April 27**.

For instructions on completing the District/LEA Teacher of the Year application, click on the following link:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/Recognition/default.aspx>

If you have any questions about the timeline for your LEA, please contact Mary Keenan (mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov), our Education Recognition Coordinator.

From RIDE:

Public hearing scheduled on proposed certification tests

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

RIDE will conduct a public hearing on April 25, at 4 p.m., at the Cranston High School West library, 80 Metropolitan Ave. 02920, to invite comments from the Rhode Island education community and from the general public on proposed certification tests and passing scores for initial educator certification in Rhode Island. The proposed certification test would be required of any prospective or current educator seeking to obtain the initial issuance of a Rhode Island educator certification. Currently, certified educators would not be required to take the proposed certification tests.

The proposed certification tests and passing scores can be viewed at the following link:
<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/Certification/default.aspx>

Please direct any questions to Andre Audette (andre.audette@ride.ri.gov, 222-5103) in the Office of Educator Quality and Certification.

Training scheduled for career-technical education data collection

Please see this notice from our Office of Multiple Pathways, which we have sent directly to all high-school principals:

Our continued receipt of federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act funding is dependent on local education agencies' reporting annual career-and-technical education data to RIDE. These data are passed on to the U. S. Office of Vocational and Adult Education, which culminates in a national accountability Report to Congress focused on the success of the Act.

Your portion of the Rhode Island submission is critical, so to assist your LEA in submitting data using the web-based data-entry and collection RI-CATS system, RI-CATS training sessions will begin on Wednesday, May 9, and end on Friday, May 18, running each day from 10 to 11:30 a.m. The trainings are designed so that those individuals responsible for Perkins data collection and input processes will attend one 90-minute online training session. Enrollment is limited to 10 participants (10 computer connections) per session. The trainings will provide guidance and instruction regarding access to and proper use of the *updated* system for the 2011-12 reporting period.

Please be sure your LEA observes the following important dates:

Training Registration Deadline - Tuesday, May 8
and
RICATS Data Submission Deadline – Friday, June 29

To register, use your required eRide identification number. Note: Individuals without an eRide identification number must contact Rick Farnsworth by e-mail, at Richard.Farnsworth@ride.ri.gov or by calling 222-8946.

To register, click on these links:

For RICATS Experienced Participants (RICATS Reporters):
<https://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopReg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=438>

For RICATS New or Experienced Participants (RICATS Reporters):
<https://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopReg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=439>

For RICATS Adult Skills Training Programs Participants only (RICATS Reporters):
<https://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopReg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=440>

Training materials will be forwarded to you prior to the session for which you are registered. Should you need additional information or technical assistance with the registration, data collection, or reporting, please contact Brenda Trudeau, at 849-7734 or by e-mail at brenda@kyran.com.

As always, we look forward to working with you on this important federal requirement and thank you in advance for your continued cooperation.

RIDE to hold Educator Recognition Celebration, announce Teacher of the Year in September

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

Please save the date for the next Teacher of the Year announcement and Educator Recognition Celebration: Wednesday, September 5, from 4 to 7 p.m., at Orchard Farms Elementary School, 1555 Scituate Ave., Cranston 02921. As you may know, RIDE is planning to expand the next Teacher of the Year announcement and Educator Recognition Celebration to include the announcement of the winner and new benefits and prizes for the state Teacher of the Year and district Teachers of the Year. Please hold this date, and we will distribute further information as the time nears. For questions about this event or the Teacher of the Year program, please contact Mary Keenan, at mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov.

RIDE schedules release of growth data, hosts Rhode Island Growth Model workshops

Please see this notice from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

On May 9, RIDE will release to the public growth data for grades 3 through 7 and we will launch the new Growth Model Visualization Tool. As you may know, the Rhode Island Growth Model is a statistical model used to calculate student progress, or “growth,” from year to year on the NECAP reading and mathematics assessments. The Growth Model Visualization Tool is an online tool that enables users to view data in a dynamic, user-friendly format.

Following the public release, RIDE will host regional workshops for elementary- and middle-school principals and other school and district leaders. Participants will learn about how student-growth percentiles are calculated and how to use the Growth Model Visualization Tool. Sessions will include an opportunity to view district-specific growth data.

Dates and locations:

Tuesday, May 15, from 1 - 3 p.m.
Pawtucket Central Administration Building

Wednesday, May 16, from 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.
Pawtucket Central Administration Building

Thursday, May 17, from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Department of Administration, Providence

*Monday, May 21, from 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. and from 1 - 3 p.m.
Middletown, Oliphant Administration Building

*Tuesday, May 22, from 1 - 3 p.m.
Westerly, Tower St. School Community Center

Thursday, May 24, from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Department of Administration, Providence

*Thursday, May 24, from 1 – 3 p.m.
URI Providence

**Important:* Laptops (not tablets) are required for sessions marked with an asterisk.

Online registration is available through the RIDE calendar, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/ridecalendar.aspx>

If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Brown, at Jessica.Brown@RIDE.RI.GOV or 222-8253, or Ana Karantonis, at Ana.Karantonis@RIDE.RI.GOV or 222-8940.

School Health Program regulations posted for public hearing

Please see this notice from our Office of Student, Community, and Academic Supports:

The *Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs* have been revised and updated to align with current statutes, to address emerging issues, and to promote national best practices. The proposed regulations will be going to public hearing on Monday, May 14, at the Department of Health, Auditorium (see link below):

http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/holding/DOH/SchoolHealthPrograms_HearingNotice_14May2012.pdf

Information available online about the Educator Performance and Support System

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

RIDE has created an online resource for sharing information and updates about the Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS). The page, which is located on the RIDE website, can be accessed through the Office of Educator Quality and Certification home page or directly, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/EPSS.aspx>.

SurveyWorks response rates increase

Please see this message from our Office of Data, Analysis, and Research:

We are pleased to announce that statewide participation in the SurveyWorks survey increased this year, particularly in our urban communities. More than twice as many parents took the survey statewide this year compared with last year. Also, more students at all levels, more teachers, and more administrators took the survey this year. Please pass along our thanks to everyone who made this possible, particularly the site coordinators in each school.

In particular, we would like to acknowledge the following districts: Jamestown and Coventry, which had the highest parent-participation rates in the state, and New Shoreham and Cranston, which had the highest teacher-participation rates in the state.

In addition, we would like to acknowledge the following schools that had high rates across the board: the Greene School; the Learning Community Charter School; the Met; the Segue Institute for Learning; the Thornton School, in Johnston; and the Matunuck School, in South Kingstown.

Reminder - RIDE seeking educator-evaluation training facilitators

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

RIDE and the West Bay Regional Collaborative are working together to recruit educators to co-facilitate summer evaluation-training academies. An application with contact information is available, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/EdEvalAnnounce.aspx>.

Please share this opportunity with administrators and teacher leaders. The application is also available on School Spring. It's a great way to build capacity and knowledge about the Rhode Island Model for Education Evaluation.

Meeting for data managers (in some LEAs the IT director)

Please see this notice from our Office of Network and Information Systems:

The Office of Network and Information Systems is hosting a meeting at RIDE on Thursday, April 26th from 3-5 PM for LEA data managers (in some LEAs the IT director). During this meeting, we will go over changes to student data collections for the 2012-13 school year. RIDE will present data collection changes for the 2012-13 school year. During this session we will also be looking for LEA feedback on the changes in order to finalize the requirements for 2012-13. It is important that all LEAs participate in this session.

To register for this session at RIDE please go to:

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/WorkshopReg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=479>.

If your LEA is not able to participate in the session at RIDE, your LEA may participate through a webinar. To register for the webinar, please go to:

<https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/120604182>.

InfoWorks 2.0 to go LIVE on Monday April 17

Please see this notice from our Office of Data, Analysis and Research

InfoWorks LIVE (<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Default.aspx>) has been reorganized based on feedback from users of all types – parent, teachers, administrators, the community and policy-makers.. The new site is easier to navigate and includes clearer and richer charts and graphs. The site now has a state page dedicated to examining data across the state. There is a searchable data dictionary so that the public can better understand the various initiatives taking place in Rhode Island schools, and it includes sortable Uniform Chart of Accounts tables – both district-level comparisons and district-level detail. The site now includes all of RIDE's most up-to-date information.

Other:

TIAA-CREF prepares FAQs on Rhode Island defined-contribution retirement plan – see attachment

TIAA-CREF, the financial-services company that the State of Rhode Island has selected to administer the new defined-contribution retirement plan for all state employees and teachers, has prepared a set of answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the retirement plan, which we have attached to this Field Memo. We encourage you to distribute this flyer widely within your community. TIAA-CREF is also planning other outreach to teachers regarding the retirement plan.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx>